In the Claims:

Please amend claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 13, as follows:

1. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition comprising:

(a) 3 to 60% by weight of a phosphorous containing material which decomposes to produce phosphoric acid when the coating is exposed to fire;

(b) 10 to 30% by weight of a thermosetting binder;

(c) 2.5 to 10% by weight of a curing agent for the thermosetting binder; and

(d) 5 to 40% by weight of a thermoplastic binder,

wherein the active groups of the thermosetting and thermoplastic binders are chosen so as to impart charring and blowing functions to the intumescent coating composition.

2. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the binder system accounts for 30% or more by weight of the composition.

3. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ wherein the phosphorous containing material is a sodium, potassium or ammonium polyphosphate.

4. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the thermosetting binder is a hydroxylated thermosetting resin.

5. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 4 wherein the thermosetting resin is an epoxy resin.

6. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the curing agent for the thermosetting binder is a phenolic curing agent.

7. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to any preceding claim wherein the thermoplastic resin is an oxygenated heterocyclic thermoplastic resin.

8. (original) A fire retardant intumescent composition according to claim 7 wherein the thermoplastic is an aldehyde or ketone resin.

9. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ containing 0.1 to 10% by weight of a melt viscosity modifier.

10. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 9 wherein the melt viscosity modifier is hydrogenated castor oil.

11. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ containing 1 to 10% by weight of a colouring agent.

12. (original)A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 11 wherein the colouring agent is titanium dioxide.

13. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ containing one or more additives selected from the group consisting of a china clay, melamine phosphate, vitrifiers, metal salts and melamine.

14. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating comprising the following components:

(a) 30 to 60% by weight of a phosphorous containing material which decomposes to produce phosphoric acid when the coating is exposed to fire;
(b) 10 to 30% by weight of a thermosetting binder;
(c) 2.5 to 10% by weight of a curing agent for the thermosetting binder;
(d) 5 to 40% by weight of a thermoplastic binder;
(e) 0 to 10% by weight of a melt viscosity modifier; and,
(f) 0 to 10% by weight of a colouring agent

in which a)-(f) must always add up to 100% by weight and wherein the active groups of the thermosetting and thermoplastic binders are chosen so as to impart charring and blowing function to the intumescent coating composition.

15. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 14 wherein the thermosetting resin is a hydroxylated thermosetting resin.

16. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 15 wherein the thermosetting resin is an epoxy resin.

17. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to any one of claims 14 to 16 wherein the thermoplastic resin is an oxygenated heterocyclic thermoplastic resin.

18. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 17 wherein the thermoplastic resin is an aldehyde or ketone resin.

19. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating ~~composition substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the Examples~~ made from the composition as claimed in claim 1 or 14.